

## **COMMERCIAL ITEM DESCRIPTION**

### **CHEESE, LATIN-STYLE (QUESO BLANCO)**

**The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has authorized the use of this Commercial Item Description.**

**1. SCOPE.** This Commercial Item Description (CID) covers Latin-Style Cheese (Queso Blanco) packed in commercially acceptable containers, suitable for use by the Federal, state, local governments, and other interested parties.

#### **2. PURCHASER NOTES.**

##### **2.1 Purchasers *shall specify* the following.**

- Type(s) and style(s) (Sec. 3).
- When the age requirement at the time of delivery is other than specified (Sec. 5.6).
- When analytical and microbial requirements are different than specified (Sec. 6.1).
- When analytical and microbial requirements need to be verified (Sec. 6.3).
- Manufacturer's/distributor's certification (Sec. 9.2) or USDA certification (Sec. 9.3).

##### **2.2 Purchasers *may specify* the following.**

- Manufacturer's quality assurance (Sec. 9.1 with 9.1.1), (Sec. 9.1 with 9.1.2), or (Sec. 9.1 with 9.1.3).
- Special labeling and packaging requirements (Sec. 10).

**3. CLASSIFICATION.** The Queso Blanco shall conform to the following list, which shall be specified, as required, in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order.

#### **Types and styles.**

**Type I** - Bulk Wheel

**Type II** - Loaf

**Style A** - Acid Set

**Style B** - Enzyme Set

**4. MANUFACTURER'S/DISTRIBUTOR'S NOTES. Manufacturer's/distributor's products *shall meet the requirements of the:***

- Salient characteristics (Sec. 5).
- Analytical requirements: *as specified by the purchaser* (Sec. 6).
- Manufacturer's/distributor's assurance (Sec. 7).
- Regulatory requirements (Sec. 8).
- Quality assurance provisions: *as specified by the purchaser* (Sec. 9).
- Packaging requirements other than commercial: *as specified by the purchaser* (Sec. 10).

**5. SALIENT CHARACTERISTICS.**

**5.1 Definition.** Queso Blanco is a Latin-style cheese prepared traditionally by either an acid set or enzyme-set process. Queso Blanco is a creamy "white cheese" made from pasteurized cow's milk. Queso Blanco has a slightly acid flavor, does not melt when heated and is sliceable. The curd is not finely milled, giving the cheese a tougher texture. Queso Blanco is popularly used in enchiladas and burritos.

**5.2 Processing.** The Queso Blanco shall be prepared and packaged in accordance with current good manufacturing practices (21 CFR Part 110).

**5.2.1 Pasteurization.** All dairy ingredients shall be pasteurized at a temperature of not less than 71.7°C (161°F) for a period of not less than 15 seconds, or for a time and at a temperature equivalent thereto in phosphatase destruction.

**5.2.2 Dairy ingredients.** Dairy ingredients used in the manufacture of Queso Blanco shall originate from a plant that has been approved by the Dairy Grading Branch (DGB), Dairy Programs (DP), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), USDA. The manufacturing plants shall be eligible for listing in the most recent version of the publication Dairy Plants Surveyed and Approved for USDA Grading Service.

**5.3 Finished product.**

**5.3.1 Appearance.** The Queso Blanco shall be clean and free from all impurities, mold, soft spots, cheese pests and any objectionable surface flavor or condition which may detract from the quality of the finished product.

**5.3.2 Color.** The Queso Blanco shall have a creamy white, uniform bright color, and an attractive sheen, not gloss.

**5.3.3 Flavor and odor.** The Queso Blanco shall have a bland to slightly acid flavor. The Queso Blanco may possess a fresh flavor, but shall not possess any undesirable flavors or odors.

**5.3.4 Body and texture.** The body of the Queso Blanco shall be smooth, medium firm, resilient and free from pinholes, crystals or openings except those caused by steam. The texture shall be close, tough and free from lumps or uncooked particles, but mush chunk freely. The Queso Blanco may show slight brittleness or roughness. Queso Blanco shall not stick to the knife or break when cut into 0.64 cm (¼ in) chunks. When heated the body shall become soft but shall not lose its shape or run.

**5.3.5 Shelf life.** The shelf life of Queso Blanco shall not be less than 180 days after manufacture, when refrigerated between 0.6 to 3.3°C (33 to 38°F) and shall not be less than 14 months after manufacture, when frozen below -6.7°C (20°F).

**5.3.6 Meltability.** The Queso Blanco shall demonstrate satisfactory meltability characteristics, and shall be at the No. 3 or greater level in accordance with Methods of Laboratory Analysis, DA INSTRUCTION 918-RL.

#### **5.4 Physical Qualities.**

**5.4.1 Fat content.** The fat content of the Queso Blanco shall not be less than 19.0 percent but no more than 25.0 percent.

**5.4.2 Moisture content.** The moisture content of the Queso Blanco shall not be less than 45.0 percent and not more than 55.0 percent.

**5.4.3 Protein.** The protein content of the Queso Blanco shall not be less than 20.0 percent and not more than 22.0 percent.

**5.4.4 Salt content.** The salt content of the Queso Blanco shall not be less than 1.8 percent but not more than 3.0 percent.

**5.4.5 pH.** The Queso Blanco shall not have a pH value exceeding 5.6 using the quinhydrone method.

**5.5 Age requirement.** The Queso Blanco must not be manufactured more than 60 days prior to delivery.

#### **6. ANALYTICAL REQUIREMENTS.**

**6.1 Analytical and microbial requirements.** Unless otherwise specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the Queso Blanco shall conform to the following analytical requirements and microbial requirements:

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Fat	Not less than 19.0 percent
Moisture	Not less than 45.0 percent
Protein	Not less than 20.0 percent
Salt	Not less than 1.8 percent
<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	Negative
pH	Not exceeding 5.6

**6.2 Preparation of sample.** A minimum of 100 g of Queso Blanco must be blended to uniformity in a minimum time using a Robot Coupe food processor (AOAC 983.18) or equivalent. This uniform sample may then be used in the analyses for fat, moisture, salt, and pH. For the meltability test, a uniform sample slice measuring 0.64 cm (¼ in) thick and 3.81 cm (1½ in) in diameter must be used. No further processing is required for the meltability testing of the sample.

**6.3 Analytical, microbial and physical testing.** When specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, analyses shall be in accordance with the following methods from the Official Methods of Analysis of the AOAC International 1/, from the Bacteriological Analytical Manual (BAM) method 2/, the latest edition of the Standard Methods for the Examination of Dairy Products 3/ or the latest edition of the AMS Methods of Laboratory, DA INSTRUCTION 918-RL, Resident Grading Quality Control Service Programs and Laboratory Analysis 4/.

<u>Test</u>	<u>Method</u>
Fat	933.05 <u>1/</u>
Moisture	926.08 or 977.11 <u>1/</u>
Salt	935.43 or 983.14 <u>1/</u>
<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	993.09 or 993.12 <u>1/</u> or BAM, Ch. 10 <u>2/</u>
pH	Quinhydrone <u>3/</u>
Meltability*	D.1.j <u>4/</u>

\* The cheese shall be placed on a Petri dish in an oven preheated to 205°C (400°F) and baked at that temperature for 10 minutes.

**6.3.1 Test results.** The test results for fat, moisture, and salt shall be reported to the nearest 0.1 percent; *Listeria monocytogenes* shall be negative; pH to the nearest 0.1 value; and meltability shall be greater than Number 1. Any result not conforming to the analytical requirements shall be cause for rejection of the lot.

**7. MANUFACTURER'S/DISTRIBUTOR'S PRODUCT ASSURANCE.** The manufacturer/distributor shall certify that the Queso Blanco provided shall meet the salient characteristics of this CID, conform to their own specifications, standards, and quality assurance practices, and be the same Queso Blanco offered for sale in the commercial market. The purchaser reserves the right to require proof of conformance.

**8. REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS.** The delivered Queso Blanco shall comply with all applicable Federal and State mandatory requirements and regulations relating to the preparation, packaging, labeling, storage, distribution, and sale of the Queso Blanco within the commercial marketplace. The delivered Queso Blanco shall comply with all applicable provisions of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act, and regulations promulgated thereunder. When the Queso Blanco is used for the National School Lunch Program, the cheese must comply with all applicable provisions of the Child Nutrition Programs.

**9. QUALITY ASSURANCE PROVISIONS.** *Purchaser shall specify 9.2 or 9.3; purchaser may specify 9.1 with 9.1.1, 9.1 with 9.1.2 or 9.1 with 9.1.3.*

**9.1 Manufacturer's quality assurance.** When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the product manufacturer shall be required to provide evidence, by certificate, that the manufacturing plant has undertaken one of the following quality assurance measures within 12 months prior to providing a bid, or no later than 10 business days from the date of awarding of the contract. Failure to provide this documentation within the proper time frame may result in the contract being terminated for cause.

**9.1.1 Plant systems audit.** A plant systems audit (PSA) shall be conducted by USDA, AMS, or other third party auditing service and is required within 12 months prior to the date of the awarding of the contract. *(An AMS PSA verifies the manufacturer's capability to produce products in a clean, sanitary environment in accordance with Title 21 Code of Federal Regulations Part 110 - Current Good Manufacturing Practice in Manufacturing, Packing, or Holding Human Food; and have in place an internal quality assurance program. The AMS PSA determines the manufacturer's ability to produce under this CID, if the products of interest are identified at the time of the PSA.)*

**9.1.2 Plant survey.** A plant survey shall be conducted by USDA, AMS, or other third party auditing service and is required within 12 months prior to the date of the awarding of the contract. *(An AMS plant survey audit verifies that, at the time of the survey, the manufacturer produces products in a clean, sanitary environment in accordance with Title 21 Code of Federal Regulations Part 110 - Current Good Manufacturing Practice in Manufacturing, Packing, or Holding Human Food.)*

**9.1.3 Total Quality Systems Audit.** A total quality systems audit (TQSA) conducted by USDA/Farm Service Agency (FSA), or another survey performed by a third party auditing service is required within 12 months prior to the date of the awarding of the contract. *(A FSA TQSA verifies the manufacturer's capability to produce products in a clean, sanitary environment in accordance with Title 21 Code of Federal Regulations Part 110 - Current Good Manufacturing Practice in Manufacturing, Packing, or Holding Human Food, and verifies that the manufacturer has in place an internal quality assurance program. The FSA TQSA determines the manufacturer's ability to produce under this CID, if the products of interest are*

*identified at the time of the TQSA.)*

**9.2 Manufacturer's/distributor's certification.** When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the manufacturer/distributor will certify that the prepared Queso Blanco distributed meets or exceeds the requirements of this CID.

**9.3 USDA certification.** When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order that product quality or acceptability or both be determined, USDA, AMS, DGB, DP shall be the certifying agency. DGB shall certify the quality and acceptability of the Queso Blanco in accordance with agency procedures which include selecting random samples of the Queso Blanco, evaluating the samples for conformance with the salient characteristic of this CID and other contractual requirements, and documenting the findings on official score sheets and/or certificates. In addition, when required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, DGB inspectors will examine the Queso Blanco for conformance to the United States Standards of Condition of Food Containers in effect on the date of the solicitation.

**10. PACKAGING.** Preservation, packaging, packing, labeling, and case marking shall be in accordance with good commercial packaging unless otherwise specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order.

**11. USDA INSPECTION NOTES.** When Section 9.3 is specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, USDA certification shall include evaluation of the quality and condition of samples of the Queso Blanco and compliance with requirements in the following areas.

- Salient characteristics (Sec. 5).
- Analytical requirements *when specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order* (Sec. 6.1). When USDA testing of Queso Blanco consistency is specified, DGB inspection personnel shall select samples and conduct the tests.
- Packaging requirements (Sec. 10 or as specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order).

**12. REFERENCE NOTES.**

**12.1 USDA Certification Contacts.**

**12.1.1 USDA certification contact.** For USDA certification, contact the **Branch Chief, DGB, DP, AMS, USDA, STOP 0230, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-0230**, telephone (202) 720-7471 or on the Internet at: [www.ams.usda.gov/dairy/grade.htm](http://www.ams.usda.gov/dairy/grade.htm).

**12.1.2 Total Quality Systems Audit contact.** Inquiries about services and fees should be directed to: **Warehouse Licensing and Examination Division, Stop 9148, Kansas City Commodity Office, 6501 Beacon Drive, Kansas City, Missouri 64133-6476**, telephone (816) 926-6417 or Fax (816) 926-1774, Website: [www.fsa.usda.gov/daco/TQSA/tqsa.htm](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/daco/TQSA/tqsa.htm).

**12.1.3 CN meal pattern requirements contact.** For CN crediting information, contact the **Head, Technical Assistance Section, Child Nutrition Division, Food and Nutrition Service, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22302**, telephone (703) 305-2609 or on the Internet at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns>.

## **12.2 Sources of documents.**

### **12.2.1 Sources of information for nongovernmental documents is as follows:**

Copies of the Official Methods of Analysis of the AOAC International may be obtained from: **AOAC International, 481 North Fredrick Avenue, Suite 500, Gaithersburg, MD 20877-2417**, telephone (301) 924-7077. Internet address: <http://www.aoac.org>.

### **12.2.2 Sources of information for governmental documents are as follows:**

Applicable provisions of the: the Child Nutrition Programs are contained in 7 CFR Parts 210, 220, 225, 226, and Appendices A and C; the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act are contained in 16 CFR Parts 500 to 503; and the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act is contained in 21 CFR Parts 1 to 199. These documents may be purchased from. **Superintendent of Documents, New Orders, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-7954**. Credit card (MasterCard or Visa) purchases may be made by calling the Superintendent of Documents on (202) 512-1803 or on the Internet at: <http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara>.

Copies of the FDA Bacteriological Analytical Manual (BAM) may be obtained from: **AOAC International, 481 North Fredrick Avenue, Suite 500, Gaithersburg, MD 20877-2417**, telephone (301) 924-7077. Internet address: <http://www.aoac.org>.

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Copies of this CID, the United States Standards for Condition of Food Containers, and beneficial comments, recommendations, additions, deletions, clarifications, etc. and any data which may improve this CID are available from and/or provided to. **Head, Food Quality Assurance Staff, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, USDA, STOP 0243, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-0243, telephone (202) 720-9939, Fax (202) 690-0102, via E-mail. FQAStaff@usda.gov or on the Internet at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/fv/fvqual.htm>.**

Copies of the General Specifications for Dairy Plants Approved for USDA Inspection and Grading Service, Dairy Plants Surveyed and Approved for USDA Grading Service, and DA INSTRUCTION 918-RL, Resident Grading Quality Control Service Programs and Laboratory Analysis are available from: **Dairy Standardization Branch, Dairy Division, STOP 0230, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-0230.**

Military activities should submit requests for copies of this CID to: **Standardization Documents Order Desk, Document Automation and Production Service, 700 Robbins Avenue, Building 4D, Philadelphia, PA 19111-5094.**

### MILITARY INTERESTS:

#### Military Coordinating Activity

Army - GL

#### Custodians

Army - GL

Navy - SA

Air Force - 35

#### Review Activities

Army - MD, QM

Navy - MC

DLA - SS

### CIVIL AGENCY COORDINATING ACTIVITIES:

DOJ - BOP

HHS - NIH, FDA

USDA - FV

VA - OSS

### PREPARING ACTIVITY.

USDA - FV

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